

## **Northwest Community Evangelical Free Church**

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Sermon manuscript

### **SERMON SERIES: Well done, good and faithful CHURCH**

(studies in 1 Thessalonians)

## **Ready or Not - Here He Comes!**

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)

Study #9

### **Introduction: Will you be ready...?**

Paul and Laura Lere are good friends and missionaries our church has supported for over twenty years. Quite a few years ago, when they were serving in Puebla, Mexico, I received an email from the Leres. This (for the most part) is what it said:

*“Greetings from Puebla! The group from the visiting church in Missouri arrived today. They are spending the day in Mexico City and will arrive in Puebla tomorrow. We have a favor to ask you guys. Paul will be driving to San Antonio for a day or two. Do you have any suggestions for where he could stay? He will have Philip and possibly a friend from here if he can get the visa. We’re looking for someone to put him up for two nights. He is helping the couple who is joining us come across the border for the first time. He may make a trip again in September for the other couple, too. Greetings to all.  
In Him, Paul and Laura”*

I was glad to get the correspondence. It’s always good to hear from such good friends. And I and others were happy at the thought of putting Paul and his son, Philip, up for a couple of days. But the note left me a little bit off-balance. You may have noticed it, too.

The note neglected to mention WHEN he and Phil were set to arrive. It was tough to find lodging for them, not knowing when they were coming to San Antonio.

Communication with Paul and Laura was not easy in those days. This was quite a while before cell phones were common and the email connection we had with the Leres in Puebla was iffy, at best.

So, not knowing if Paul was going to show up TODAY or in a few days or a few weeks, we realized that we would have to ask if there was anybody in the church who could say, *“It doesn’t matter when they arrive. We can take them at any time. We’ll just be ready for them to show up.”*

It wasn’t hard to find people who were willing to take this assignment. It wouldn’t be hard to find such people today, either. A couple in the church, Konrad and Lee Kern, volunteered to “stay ready.”

They would keep a room ready, have clean towels and bed sheets in place, the front porch light on, and the Welcome mat out until Paul arrived.

That image of the Kern’s readiness has stayed in my mind for years. I’ve thought about it often as a model of hospitality - and I thought about it again as I was spending time in our passage for today.

Preparedness - that is the theme for the day.

Preparedness is the theme of the Boy Scouts (“Be, be, be prepared, the motto of the Boy Scouts!”). Readiness was the pride of the Minutemen of the American Revolution. And awareness, vigilance and alertness is a requirement in the world of business.

It is also the call to us in the church. This morning, in light of the fact that Jesus is coming for us, we are to live READY - because just as we didn’t know WHEN the Leres were going to show up from Mexico, so we don’t know when Jesus is scheduled to arrive, either!

Today, the apostle Paul continues to address what he began to talk about at the end of 1 Thessalonians 4. He had been addressing issues concerning the future - specifically, life after death and an event we call “the Rapture.”

The Christians in Thessalonica had been concerned that only those who were alive at the time of the Rapture would get to participate in it. They wondered if those who had died “in the Lord” would ever be resurrected.<sup>1</sup>

Paul reassured them that sleeping (i.e. dead) Christians would, indeed, take part in the Rapture. In fact, those who had died in Christ would be raised first.

He didn’t want the Thessalonians to be uninformed about the specifics of this future event. He wouldn’t want you and me to be uninformed, either, so he taught us.

In that passage (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) he addressed himself to our **ignorance**. Today, he speaks to our **knowledge**, reminding us of things we know.

### **Knowing What Can and Can’t be Known (vv. 1-3)**

#### **Our RELIABLE UNCERTAINTY (vv. 1-2)**

*Paul speaks to what we KNOW (v. 1)*

***[1] Now as to the times and the epochs,<sup>2</sup> brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.***

Generally, when Scripture uses these two words together, it is in reference to end times events (the technical term is *eschatology*). Here, he affirms that his readers have a good handle on “*the times and the epochs.*”

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<sup>1</sup> As long they had this concern they would have been impatient at any prospect of postponement in His return since it cast a shadow on their own hope of being able to take part in the Rapture. Talk about taking away a restful spirit!

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is found in a number of places where prophetic events are being discussed (Acts 1:7; Daniel 2:21; 7:12; Eccles 3:1). In using the words, “*the times and the epochs*”<sup>2</sup> Paul is communicating two different but related concepts. The first word “*the times*” (“*χρονος*”) refers to a set duration of time. It is the word from which we get our English word *chronology*. The second word “*the epochs*” (“*καιρος*”) refers to a season marked by a special character as when we might say, “*It was a ‘time’ for fun.*” or “*It was a ‘season’ of hardship.*” This is time in its qualitative aspect, and means something like “opportunity.”

Paul wasn’t one to give exaggerated compliments. Flattery just wasn’t his gift. So we can assume that the Thessalonians really did know what they needed to know about end times events (likely from the time they spent with Paul when he founded the church!).

He was happy that these young converts had learned their lessons regarding eschatology. In fact, there was no need for him to write anything to them about eschatology - and with that, he wrote to them about eschatology!<sup>3</sup>

Despite what they knew, it was still a good thing to be reminded, so he takes the time to remind them. And that’s good for us! Not having had the chance to listen to the apostle Paul, personally, we get to sit in on the Thessalonians’ review session.

Today, we are going to learn some important truth about the future.

Now, while we will gain insight into God’s plans for the future, it’s important to start off with a throat-clearing, “*Ahem...*”

It is possible to know what we need to know about the future;, it is not possible to know WHEN this or that future event will happen.

It’s OK to try and figure out chronology. It’s not OK to try and fill in a calendar.

Just before the disciples watched Jesus’ ascend into heaven (Acts, chapter 1), they asked Him, [6] “***Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?***”

He replied, [7] “***It is not for you to know times or epochs*** (note the combination of those terms) ***which the Father has fixed by His own authority***”

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<sup>3</sup> It has been his pattern in 1 Thessalonians to commend the believers there for knowing stuff. At 1:8, he expressed confidence that he had no need to say anything about the Gospel because of the Thessalonians’ witness. Then, at 4:9, he said he had no need to say anything to about the need to love each other.

Let's be sure to catch that. They knew WHAT events were going to occur. They weren't going to be told WHEN; they weren't to speculate as to WHEN.

Over the last century or so, many Christians have tried to set a date for Jesus' return, for the rapture, or for some other predicted event. And you know, when they do that, they just end up looking silly. When we try to do that, we end up looking silly!

Jesus said that He didn't know when He would return. Well that should have ended all attempts to figure it out!<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the genius of God is seen in that He doesn't intend for us to know when Jesus is coming for us. It is part of His plan and purpose that we should be in the dark about when the beginning of the end will come.

That is not to say, though, that we can't know anything about the beginning of the end times. For instance, we can be certain that it will come very suddenly!

*"The Day of the Lord" (v. 2)*

*[2] For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.*

#### What is "The Day of the Lord"?

If this - "the Day of the Lord" - is a new phrase to you, you should know that, biblically, it's an important one.

This "Day" is referred to by different titles in the New Testament - the day of God (2 Peter 3:12), the day of Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup> (Philippians 1:6; also 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Cor. 1:8), "that" day (2 Thess 1:10), the last day (John 6:39ff), the great day (Jude 6), the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:5), and the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32.

<sup>5</sup> The Old Testament "Lord" in "The Day of the Lord" is YHWH. The New Testament never has any problem transferring that which is spoken about YHWH in the OT to Jesus.

But, in Scripture these references to "The Day" all refer to a time period - not just a 24 hour day - ("*times and epochs*") when God will intervene in history to **judge** His enemies, **deliver** His people, and **establish** His kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

From our passage in 1 Thessalonians, I have come to the conclusion - as have others - that the Day of the Lord will not begin until the Rapture of the church (as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) has occurred.

The Day of the Lord covers lots of events that are yet to come. It includes the time of The Great Tribulation;<sup>7</sup> it involves Jesus' return to earth; and it also takes in the establishment of His one thousand year reign on the earth as Messiah. The Day of the Lord involves all of that.

<sup>6</sup> At a time of moral laxness in the nation of Israel, God's people had been deluded into thinking that the "Day" was going to be a day of national deliverance, but the prophet Amos said that it would be for them a day of national judgment. In the overwhelming number of passages that mention the Day of the Lord (especially in the Old Testament, but also in the New), the thought is of destruction and calamity. Consider: Isaiah 13:6, "Wail, for **the day of the LORD** is near. It will come as destruction from the Almighty."; Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, **the day of the LORD** is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it."; Ezekiel 30:3, "For the day is near, even **the day of the LORD** is near; It will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations."; Joel 1:15, "Alas for the day. For **the day of the LORD** is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty." Joel 2:11; "And the LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. **The day of the LORD** is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?"; Amos 5:18, "Alas, you who are longing for **the day of the LORD**, for what purpose will **the day of the LORD** be to you? It will be darkness and not light."; Obadiah 1:15, "For **the day of the LORD** draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head."; Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of **the great and terrible day of the LORD**."; Acts 2:20, "THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE **GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD** SHALL COME."; 1 Cor. 5:5, "I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in **the day of the Lord Jesus**."; 2 Peter 3:10, "But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

<sup>7</sup> A seven year time frame spoken of in many places, but especially described in the book of Revelation.

Here, Paul tells us that it (“the Day”) will come like [2]...*a thief in the night*.<sup>8</sup> And he got that figure of speech from Jesus, who once used the same phrase when speaking of His return.

The manner of the Day’s arrival.

*[Matthew 24:42] “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. [43] But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.”*

When Jesus starts the ball rolling with the event (the Rapture) that will culminate in His return to earth at the Second Coming, it will come as a complete surprise to everybody. Nobody will be expecting it.

Now, “*thief in the night*” is an apt metaphor these days at Northwest. If we had known that our church building was going to be broken into on Wednesday night, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, we would have prepared ourselves. We would have asked for additional police drive-bys, stationed big-hulking deacons in front of the plate glass windows, taken valuables out of the Worship Center.

But that night, burglars found our building unguarded. One rock was all it took to break in. A snatch and grab later and Michael was minus one guitar, Phil was minus a bass amplifier, and our back door was rendered unclosable.

The thief breaks in suddenly and unexpectedly - and that is how the Lord Jesus Christ will begin the Day of the Lord - with no warning.<sup>9</sup>

He will rapture His church to meet Him in the air, leaving the earth without any Christians. And this event will usher in the Day of the Lord.

We are uncertain as to the time of this event, but its coming is as reliable as the sunrise.

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly enough, the early church believed that Christ would come at night - which will, of course be true for about half of the world’s population... ☺

<sup>9</sup> It will be a surprise to every believer (Matthew 24:42; 25:13). It will surprise every non-believer (Luke 12:46).

Contrast the uncertain reliability of the coming Day of the Lord with the unreliable certainty of others.

**The Unreliable Certainty of Others (v. 3)**

*[3] While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.*

Many people will be going about their business, confident that everything is going just fine. No problems. Some may well believe that the sudden disappearance of Christians at the Rapture is a good thing, that life will get better. They’ll be thinking “*Peace and safety*” is the order of the day.

They will quickly see that they couldn’t have been more wrong.

My understanding of Scripture is that following the Rapture of the Church, there will be a time of unparalleled trouble - war, famine, disease, cataclysmic upheavals on earth and in heaven.

This time of trouble will last for seven years. We refer to this time period as The Great Tribulation. And, for those who remain behind and are not raptured with the church, there will be no escape from the calamity of the Tribulation.

Judgments will wash over the population of the earth like waves. Or, as Paul says, like birth pangs upon a woman in the delivery room.<sup>10</sup>

This seven years worth of tribulation is described in detail in the book of Revelation in chapter 6-19. And, while there are glimpses of grace scattered throughout these chapters, they mainly depict a season of world history marked by destruction.

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<sup>10</sup> The thought of childbirth here is not to emphasize the pain of the process, but that when the time has come, what is in the womb must come forth. The travail cannot be avoided, and so with the destruction of which the apostle writes. The birth (or in this case, the coming of Christ to the earth for destruction of those who are thinking “Peace and safety”) is written into the nature of things and must inevitably come to pass.

The Tribulation period is a time when the wrath of God is poured out on a rebellious planet.

Now, how will all of this affect believers? That's the theme Paul takes up next.

### “Day-Timers” (vv. 4-10)

#### Believers: Not Subject to “Night” (vv. 4-5)

*[4] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day<sup>11</sup> would overtake you like a thief; <sup>12</sup> [5] for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness*

Please note: This is **not** an exhortation to us to do something. This is a description of who we Christians are.

We are not being urged to “be light” or to “walk in the light”<sup>13</sup> or to “shine”.

Rather, Paul says we ARE NOT in darkness, but ARE sons (and daughters) of light.

And by the time the Day of the Lord comes<sup>14</sup>, we who are sons and daughters of light and day will have already been rescued. We will have been rescued by the Rapture! The judgments of the Day of the Lord won't touch us.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The “day” mentioned here is the same one mentioned in verse 2.

<sup>12</sup> There is a variant reading that yields a slightly different sense. “thieves” instead of “a thief” - in this case, the sense would be not that the Day will come as unheralded as a thief, but that it will surprise people, just as thieves are surprised by the coming of dawn. I, personally, think it is better to take the verse as it stands. - “The Day will overtake those who are in darkness as a thief overtakes those in a home who are not prepared.”

<sup>13</sup> Something that is perfectly appropriate to urge in certain contexts, as John does in his first epistle.

<sup>14</sup> A Day which will be characterized by darkness - the darkness of chaos and confusion and suffering initiated by the wrath of God

<sup>15</sup> This understanding of end times events follows what is usually referred to as “Pre-Tribulationism” - meaning that the Rapture will occur *before* the Tribulation Period begins.

And that declaration of fact (we are of the light) leads Paul to issue a very serious exhortation.

#### Believers: Called to Wakefulness (vv. 6-8)

*We are to be “morning people”*

*[6] so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. [7] For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.*

Do you know any morning people? Morning people greet you early in the day with enthusiasm. They are alert to the beauty of the morning. They notice things at the beginning of each fresh day.<sup>16</sup>

They are so annoying! And, yes, I admit it. I am one of those annoying morning people. Not everybody is. Not everyone I love is.

Many years ago - in fact, for the first several weeks of our married life - I thought that my lovely bride was upset with me most every morning.

When I (of course, very lovingly) questioned Kathy about this, she told me that she wasn't mad. She just wasn't awake!

Now it is not at all my intent to make heroes out of morning people and villains out of those who prefer the night. I just want to point out that Paul is calling you and me to **alertness**.

This word we translate “**be alert**”<sup>17</sup> actually denotes watchfulness - even a watching that takes effort.

It pictures a determination to be watchful (think “*Stand watch!*”) even when the temptation hits to **NOT** be watchful. He's calling us to, spiritually speaking, shake off the cobwebs.

<sup>16</sup> Non-morning people like to quote Proverbs 27:14 “*He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be reckoned a curse to him.*”

<sup>17</sup> - Greek “gregorew” γρηγορεω

Of course, “sleepiness” here stands for spiritual lethargy and apathy. This is a warning against a lack of passion for Christ, against losing our energy and zeal for God.

So, on Thursday evening - and now on Sunday evenings - when you’re tempted to not be alert - but you’ve got to stay awake, what do you do? You head on down to Community Blend and grab a double espresso and wake up!

What do you do if you sense that you are dozing off, becoming less attentive to the realities of God and eternity?

Well, you pray. And you ask friends to pray for you and with you. And you read your Bible and read Christian books. And you meditate on and memorize Scripture. And you intentionally engage in spiritually minded conversation with friends.

You do whatever it takes, spiritually speaking, to wake up.

The danger is real that we, who are people of light and of day, might live as if we were of night and darkness.

Instead, we are to live expectantly, eager for His appearing, ready, sharp, always living in such a way that we are prepared for the Day of the Lord.

We are called to be just as ready for Jesus to come for us as Konrad and Lee Kern were for the arrival of Paul and Philip Lere from Mexico!

Now, living this way is a challenge. Paul knew that! And that is why he used a word picture that portrays just how important it is to be alert.

He reminds us that life in Christ is a pitched battle and he reminds us of this fact by the use of military terminology.<sup>18</sup>

*Put on appropriate armor (v.8)*

### Christian armor in Paul’s writings

Paul used the figure of military armor in his writings in several places.

Ephesians 6 is the best known. There, he urges us to “***stand firm against the schemes of the devil.***”<sup>19</sup>

Brothers and sisters, there are forces arrayed against you that would keep you from living a vibrant Christian life. You had better be armed to the teeth if you want to be able to live as you need to live!

There is armor to be put on!<sup>20</sup>

If you and I are going to be ready for the coming of “the Day of the Lord,” we must be on the breastplate of faith and love.

### The breastplate of faith and love

***[8] But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love...***

Think of the difference it would make in your walk with the Lord if throughout your day you were repeatedly reminding yourself that He is on His throne, that He is sovereign, that He has a hand in orchestrating your life, and that He is allowing THIS and THAT to come into your life. To live like that would be to put on the breastplate of faith.

Think of the difference it would make in your dealings with others if in each and every conversation and interaction you were purposefully striving to give that other person a taste of the perfect love of God.

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<sup>18</sup> This is the first time in his writings, taken chronologically, that he employed military terminology.

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<sup>19</sup> He also puts the picture to use in Romans 13 and in 2 Corinthians 6 and 10.

<sup>20</sup> Paul is not terribly consistent in the significance he attaches to the various pieces of armor. Rather, it is the general idea that attracts him, and not the particular details. For instance Ephesians 6 has “***the breastplate of righteousness***” and here “***the breastplate of faith and love.***”

To live that intentionally - faith toward God and love toward people - forms a breastplate that protects our hearts. It doesn't protect our hearts from *pain*. It protects our hearts from *straying*.

That breastplate of faith and love is armor that protects against the attacks of an enemy who is desperate to derail us from faithfulness and love!

And, we are to put on the helmet of the hope of salvation.

The helmet of the hope of salvation

***[8] But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on ...as a helmet, the hope of salvation.***

The **hope** Paul speaks of here is not something tentative. It is a sure hope grounded in God's action - just not fully realized yet.

And putting on the helmet of hope means that we courageously take God at His Word and live today on the basis of what He has promised will be ours in the future!

That hope not only makes the trials and troubles of this life bearable, it equips us to be prepared for "the Day of the Lord."

Because the Day is coming, it is time to wake up, look up, clean up and dress up!

And if you want some more encouragement to get you through the day living as the daytime believer you are - listen to this!

**Believers: His Good Plan for Us (vv. 9-10)**

*His plan is for us to NOT experience His wrath!*

***[9a] For God has not destined us for wrath...***

Now, will Christians experience trials and tribulations in this life? You bet we will. Some of our sufferings will even be because we are Christians!

Jesus said, ***[John 16:33] "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. IN THE WORLD YOU HAVE TRIBULATION, but take courage; I have overcome the world."***

Will Christians experience the wrath of God in eternity? Absolutely not! (see Romans 8:1)

And will Christians experience the period known as The Tribulation?

I think, based on what Paul says here in this passage, the answer is a resounding "NO!"

The Tribulation Period is a time in which the wrath of God is poured out on the earth.<sup>21</sup> And, in neither that time period NOR into eternity is it our lot to receive the wrath of God.<sup>22</sup>

Instead, God's plan is that we will obtain salvation.

*His plan is for us to obtain salvation*

***[9b]...but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.***

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<sup>21</sup> Some doubt this, but the wrath of God is a very real thing. He really does stand opposed to everything evil. One of the most awful (awe-full) truths in Scripture is that one day the world that has rejected Him will feel that wrath. Yet, the most awesome and wonderful reality is that God intends that His children never experience that wrath.

<sup>22</sup> This seems to indicate that God's plan is for Christians to not go through the Tribulation period. (Agreement on this point, though, should not be made a matter of fellowship of spirituality.) I believe this because: (1). The nature of the church is inconsistent with being on the receiving end of God's wrath; (2). The nature of the world is consistent with being on the receiving end of God's wrath; (3). The doctrine of *imminence* fits better with a pre-tribulation rapture position (If Jesus didn't return until the end of the Tribulation, then we would know when He was coming for the sequence, signs, and times are all spelled out in Revelation 6-19.); (4). The order of events as laid out in 2 Thessalonians 2 indicates that Christians will be gone from the earth when the Tribulation period begins.

Most any religion you can name presents people with something that they have to DO to be saved. It is Christianity alone which tells us that everything has already been done.

Our salvation has been won through the work of Christ on the cross when He died for us and by His glorious resurrection from the dead when He arose for us! All we “do” is rely on His finished work!

And here, at the end, Paul tells us that everything he has written about the end times is for a very specific purpose: to provide fodder for mutual ministry between us in the church.<sup>23</sup>

### **The “Point” of Knowing Our Future (v. 11)**

*[11] Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.*<sup>24</sup>

Here is another one of those, “*but excel still more*” phrases we find peppering 1 Thessalonians. Paul affirms that they are being faithful to build each other up and to encourage each other. He might just say something similar to us, too.

BUT, in light of the fact that God just might roll up the carpet of history any old time now, he says,

*“Get each other ready for the end. Give yourselves more and more to encouraging each other to trust God and to engaging in brotherly love. Build each other up by reminding each other of the hope that lies ahead.”*

### **Conclusion:**

Growing up in Dallas, I had reason to drive on one of the major thoroughfares, Northwest Highway, a lot. Northwest Highway runs through all different parts of town - rich, poor and middle class.

<sup>23</sup> At the end of chapter 4, Paul said that the POINT of all he had written about the Rapture was for the purpose of comfort (com+forte = strengthen).

<sup>24</sup> Phillips, “*So go on cheering and strengthening each other with thoughts like these.*”

If you travel on one particular section of Northwest Highway, you drive near the “old money” communities of University and Highland Parks.

On this section of Northwest Highway, the majority of the vehicles are of the Mercedes Benz, BMW, Jag, Porsche, and even more exotic sports and luxury car variety.

As you drive on Northwest Highway, in the midst of the high volume, high dollar traffic, your head spins at the fast pace of it all. Stores and shops, restaurants - and almost seeming to be out of place - a church.

A beautiful, BIG, Baptist church in the old style with white columns out front and a huge steeple with a cross at the top. On the steeple tower is a clock.

The first time I drove by the church, I was a teenager. I noticed the clock and can remember thinking, “*What a thoughtful touch to provide a timepiece so that motorists can know the time as they drive by.*”

I don’t know how many times I drove by before I noticed lettering on the clockface. One day, though, while checking the time, I saw words that had been there all along, but which I had never noticed.

### **“Night Cometh”**

Reading those words woke me up. They put me on alert. They are words of Jesus recorded in John 9:4, “*We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming* (or, as the King James has it, “*Night cometh*”), *when no man can work.*”

That church decided years and years ago to offer a transcendent reminder to the hurrying masses of motorists driving by. The clock’s message offers a message to people whose lives are ruled by the clock, who are always checking to see if there is time for this and for that.

That message is, “NOW is the time to live alertly.”

And today, the message of the Word of God to you and to me is a wake up call.